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HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE
MISSIONS OF THE AMERICAN BOARD
IN
TURKEY.

BY
REV. S. C. RARTLETT, D.D.

WITH SUPPLEMENT.

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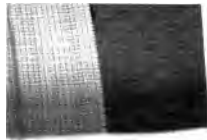
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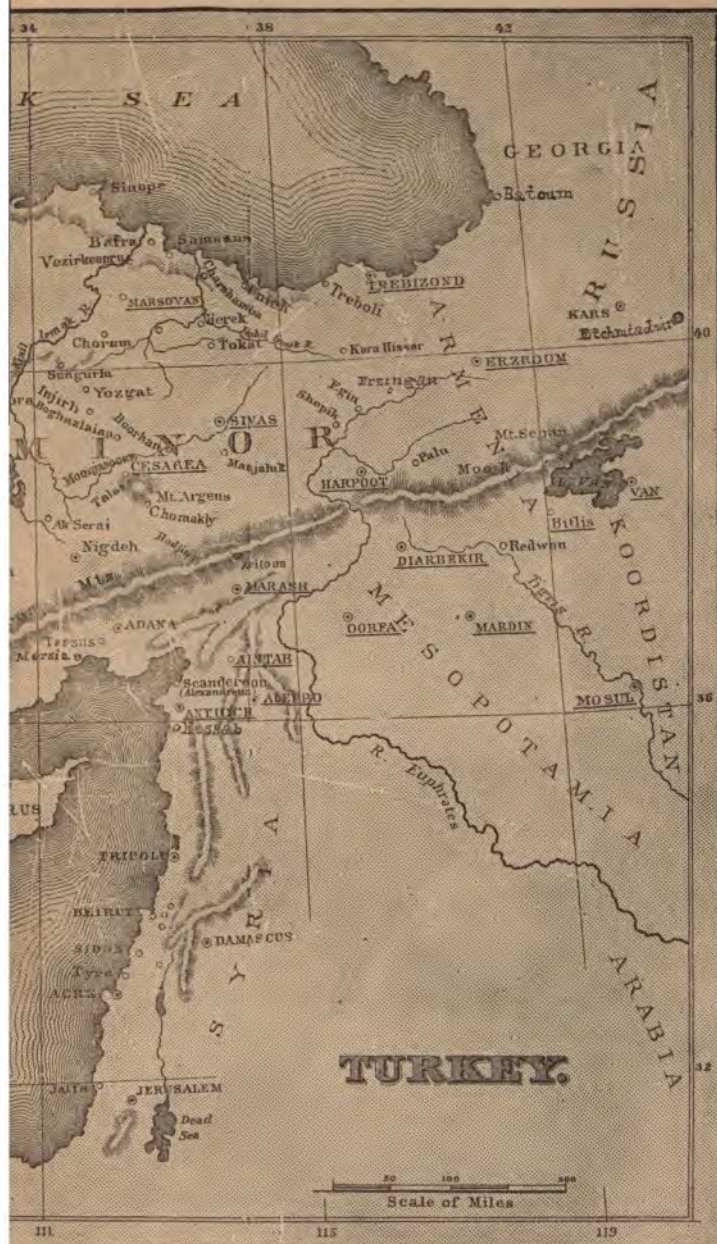
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BARTLETT'S SKETCHES.

MISSIONS IN TURKEY.

In a missionary point of view, Turkey is the key of Asia. Nowhere has the providential guidance of the missionary work been more remarkable. The divine hand has alike prepared the minds of the Armenian people in Turkey for Christian influences, directed attention thither, blessed the missionaries with wisdom, interposed continually for the protection of their work, and led them forward to a success already so broad and deep, as to be silently molding the destinies of the empire.

The first effort of the American Board in Asia Minor was quite wide of the mark. It was when, in 1826, Messrs. Gridley and Brewer were sent to Smyrna, the ancient home of Polycarp, to labor with the Greeks and Jews. The movement was attended with no great success, and the place became important chiefly as a printing station. The Mohammedans of the country meanwhile seemed inaccessible to all direct Christian labors.

But there was one most interesting people in the country, signally qualified to be the recipients and almoners of the divine grace. It is the old Armenian race, now widely scattered from their native Armenia, and dispersed everywhere in Turkey and Persia, and found even in India, Russia, and Poland. There are supposed to be at least three millions of them, more than half of whom are said

to be in Turkey. They are a noble race, and have been called "the Anglo-Saxons of the East." They are the active and enterprising class. Shrewd, industrious, and persevering, they are the bankers of Constantinople, the artisans of Turkey, and the merchants of Western and Central Asia. The nation received Christianity in the fourth century, and had a translation of the Scriptures made in the year 477 A. D., which is still extant and profoundly venerated, though now locked up, with many other religious works of theirs, in a dead language.

The Armenian church is a body as marked as the Roman Catholic or Greek church, strongly resembling them in deadness and formalism. Its head is the Catholicos. It holds to transubstantiation, invokes the saints, enforces confession and penance, teaches baptismal regeneration, priestly absolution, and the merit of good works, observes fourteen great feast days, one hundred and sixty-five fast days, and minor feasts more numerous than the days of the year. It has nine grades of clergy, some of whom are obliged to be once married, and performs all church services in the ancient Armenian, not one word of which is understood by the people. For purposes of persecution, as well as government, the Patriarch had, until recently, almost despotic power. But there are hopeful features even about this fossilized church. It openly adhered to the Christian name and profession under centuries of persecution and oppression. It regards the Word of God with almost unexampled reverence, so that when the Armenian is once convinced that any proposition is contained in the book he has learned to kiss at the altar, that is to him an end of all controversy. Another hopeful circumstance, directly connected with this, is that the errors of doctrine and practice with which the church is

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incrusted round, have never been fixed by any decree of council. Their standard of moral purity is also said to be immeasurably above that of the Turks around them, and they have a conscience which can be touched and roused. The enterprising character of the race, their wide dispersion, their preservation of the sentiment of national unity, and their acquaintance with the languages of the lands of their residence, render them a people of great promise for missionary purposes in those several lands.

A singular coincidence of judgment fixed the attention of the American Board upon this race. The missionary Parsons, on his first visit to Jerusalem, in 1821, encountered some Armenian pilgrims, whose interesting conversation drew from him the suggestion of a mission to Armenia itself. "We shall rejoice," said they, "and all will rejoice when they arrive." Mr. Fisk soon after wrote from Smyrna to Boston, recommending the measure. But before a word was heard from either, intelligent friends of the Board at home had urged the same proposal. At Beirut, Syria, among the earliest converts were the Armenian ecclesiastics (in 1826), two of whom, Bishop Dionysius and Krikor Vartabed, had traveled extensively in Asia Minor, and resided once in Constantinople. These brethren assured the missionaries that the minds of the Armenian people were wonderfully inclined towards the pure gospel, and that should preachers go among them, doubtless thousands of them would be ready to receive the truth. They themselves wrote letters to their countrymen, which excited no little attention.

During a dozen years or more, already, the British and Russian Bible Societies had put in circulation several thousand copies of the Scriptures in the ancient Armenian

tongue, which were widely distributed in Turkey, and could be understood by the teachers and higher clergy; and at length they printed the New Testament in Armeno-Turkish and modern Armenian, intelligible to all who could read. Another important link in the chain of influences was the letter of Dr. King to the Roman Catholics, written on leaving Syria, and stating the reasons why he could not be a Papist. This letter, translated by Bishop Dionysius, and forwarded in manuscript to certain prominent Armenians in Constantinople, produced an extraordinary effect. A meeting was held, its Scripture references examined, and the determination adopted to do something to purify the church. One immediate effect was a training school for priests. At the head of it was placed Peshtimaljian, a profound scholar, a theologian, and a humble student of the Bible—a sort of oriental Melancthon, even in his timidity. For while steadily exerting an evangelical influence, and silently guiding his pupils into new paths of inquiry, he was alarmed when he saw them joining the evangelical movement; and though at length he gained firmness enough to encourage their course, it was only on the year of his death that he openly declared his position. All the first converts at Constantinople were from his alumni.

In 1829 the Prudential Committee prepared the way, by the exploring tour of Messrs. Smith and Dwight among the Armenians; and two years later the noble Goodell began his work at Constantinople, to be followed in due time by the admirable band of associates, Dwight, Riggs, Schauffler, Schneider, Hamlin, Bliss, Powers, Pratt, Wheeler, and others, whose names are as household words in the churches. Their firmness, fidelity, and wisdom have been the theme of frequent

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commendation from foreigners in public as well as in private life.

The first missionaries, Goodell and Dwight, seemed compelled, by the circumstances of the case, to reach the people, at first, chiefly by means of schools and the press.

The several translations of the Bible, — Armenian, Armeno-Turkish, Osmanli-Turkish, Hebrew-Spanish, Hebrew-German, and finally Bulgarian, — and the various other books which they and their coadjutors have gradually sent forth, till they amount to a great body of literature, proved in due time to be the planting of siege guns, and the unlimbering of heavy artillery.

When Mr. Goodell called upon the Patriarch to seek his co-operation in establishing popular schools on an improved plan, that blindest of Orientals promised to send schoolmasters to learn the new method, and assured him of a love for the missionary and his country so profound, that if Mr. Goodell had not come to visit him, he must needs have gone to America to see Mr. Goodell! The one assurance meant as much as the other. The Patriarch promised again and again, but never moved till he moved in opposition. For nearly two years the missionaries gained little access to the Armenians. But God brought the Armenians to them.

The dawn of hope began in January, 1833, when young Hohanues Der Sahagyan came to open his heart. Some years before his father had bought a cheap copy of the New Testament, which the young man read and pondered, and compared with the principles and practices of his church. Then he joined the school of Peshtimaljian, where his inquiries were encouraged and aided. He was joined by his friend Senekarim, and for two years and a half they were seeking and praying together for

light, unable to grasp the great and simple doctrine of salvation by grace alone. At length a hostile report turned their attention to the missionaries, and to them they went, first Hohannes, and afterwards both together, saying, "We are in a miserable condition, and we need your help. We are in the fire; put forth your hands and pull us out." They soon found peace in believing, and became active laborers for the truth. From that point there appeared tokens of the constant presence of the Holy Spirit among the people. Opposition was speedily aroused, the school broken up, and for a time the press was stopped at Smyrna. But the good work went on. The number of attendants at Mr. Goodell's weekly meeting, and of visitors at the houses of the missionaries, steadily increased, and their errand was to talk of the way of salvation. The Bible was eagerly sought for, and the disposition to talk on religious subjects spread through the city, the suburbs, and the villages on the Bosphorus. In every circle there were found defenders of the truth, and occasionally a sincere believer. An influence was abroad which Mr. Goodell characterized as a "simple and entire yielding of the heart and life to the sole direction of God's Word and Spirit." Evangelical sermons began to be heard from the priests.

The missionary force was increased. A high school was opened at Pera, and stations occupied at Broosa and Trebizond. A school for girls — a novel thing in Turkey — was opened at Smyrna. The missionaries steadily pursued the policy of disseminating the truth, without making attacks upon the Armenian church. Still, opposition was more and more aroused, but was either frustrated or overruled to the furtherance of the mission. Then the wealthy bankers of Constantinople determined

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to crush the high school. To provide a substitute, they founded a college in Scutari, and remodeled the national school in the quarter of Hass Keuy, which they committed to the supervision of a great banker residing there. In breaking up the high school, the vicar who conveyed the message unwittingly informed the boys for the first time that the sign of the cross is not enjoined in the Scriptures. And when Hohannes Sahagyan was suddenly removed from his school of forty, to the amazement of all concerned, he was engaged by the banker of Hass Keuy to take charge of that school of *six hundred*. Every effort was made to shake the banker's decision, but though he had never been known as favoring the evangelical cause, he was perfectly firm; and so Sahagyan was advanced to a post of far greater influence and freedom, which he held for two years with marked success.

The year 1839 witnessed a deep-laid plot for the expulsion of Protestantism from the land, suddenly overthrown by the providence of God. The enemies of the mission had enlisted some of the Sultan's chief officers, and even gained the ear of the Sultan himself. Sahagyan and two other persons, a teacher and a converted priest, were arrested, imprisoned, and, with much personal cruelty, banished. The mild Armenian Patriarch was deposed, and his place filled by a man of violence; bulls were issued by both the Greek and Armenian Patriarchs, prohibiting the reading or possession of all missionary books, and even all intercourse with the missionaries. Long lists of heretics were made out, and the storm seemed about to descend in its fury, when the hand of the persecutors was arrested by the hand of God. The rebellious Pacha of Egypt was the instrument of rescue. The Sultan, with his broken army, was suddenly forced

to call on the Patriarchs for several thousand recruits. Then came the utter defeat of his army, the death of the sultan before he heard the tidings, the surrender of the whole Turkish fleet, the succession of the boy Abdool Medjid to the throne, and the threatened dissolution of the Turkish empire. The persecution was effectually stayed. By a remarkable providence, the young Sultan, unsolicited by his people, granted them a charter of civil protection and religious liberty.

The commotions concerning the missionaries gave them publicity, and brought inquirers. In 1840 Messrs. Dwight and Hamlin visited Nicomedia, where, two years before, Mr. Dwight had found a little company of believers who had been led to the truth by a copy of the Dairyman's Daughter, and other printed tracts. While here a merchant from Adabazar was induced, by the warning letter of the patriarch, to come and visit them. The report and the tracts with which he returned to Adabazar were the beginning of a good work; and when, in the following year, Mr. Schneider, in response to repeated invitations, visited the place, he found there already a little band of converted men. In 1843 a young Armenian, who had embraced and renounced Mohammedanism, was publicly beheaded in the streets of Constantinople. But this event became the occasion on which the English ambassador, supported by the ministers of France, Prussia, and Austria, extorted from the sultan a written pledge that no person thenceforward should be persecuted for his religious opinions. The British ambassador declared the transaction to be little less than a miracle. And though the pledge has been often evaded and violated in practice, it stands as a great landmark in the religious history of the empire. The Patriarch himself, two years later,

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made a fixed attempt to violate this guaranty, which redounded speedily to the establishment of the faith. He issued a sentence of excommunication against all adherents of the new doctrines, which was accompanied by scenes of shocking violence in the chief cities of the empire. Christians were stoned in the streets, unjustly imprisoned, ejected from their shops, invaded and plundered in their houses, bastinadoed, and abandoned by their friends. It marked an era in their history. For after meekly and nobly enduring this protracted abuse, they were, by the resolute efforts of the foreign ambassadors, headed by Sir Stratford Canning, taken forever from under the patriarch's jurisdiction, and organized into a separate Protestant community. On the 1st of July, 1846, was formed at Constantinople the first Evangelical Armenian church in Turkey, with a native pastor; and during that summer similar churches were formed in Nicomedia, Adabazar, and Trebizond.

The enemy had overdone his work. The excommunication was a blunder; for it founded four Protestant churches the first year. And the previous measures had been equally blundering. For, remarkable as was the spirit of inquiry among the Armenians, it had been vastly increased by the measures taken to put it down. The enemies of a pure gospel had done an immense amount of gratuitous advertising almost from the first. The Romish Patriarch had (in 1836) tried his hand at a public denunciation of the missionaries and their books. Four years later, the Armenian Patriarch had issued a "bull," followed in a fortnight by a bull from the Greek Patriarch, both of the same description, and by an imperial firman apparently re-enforcing them, and in another six weeks by still another Armenian

bull, with terrific anathemas. A Patriarchal letter had been sent to Trebizond in 1840; and in January, 1846, two successive and still more furious anathemas had been issued by the Patriarch in his official character, with the lights extinguished, and a vail before the altar, whereby the adherents of the new gospel were "accursed, excommunicated, and anathematized by God, and by all his saints, and by us." They were printed, and sent to all the churches. For six months continuously was this anathema kept dinning every Sabbath in the ears of the faithful, till cursing grew stale. The final excision that year (July) was read in all the Armenian churches.

So much thundering sent many flashes of light through the dark. The Patriarch had better facilities for advertising than the missionaries. He unquestionably sent them a multitude of inquirers. Thus his letter of warning brought the merchant of Adabazar to Messrs. Dwight and Hamlin at Nicomedia for information; and he it was who carried back the Testament and tracts that began the good work there. Many an inquirer came to ascertain personally of the missionaries whether the stories were true that the Americans were a nation of infidels, without church or worship.

When the Patriarch had hurried Bedros, the vartabed, out of the city for his Protestant tendencies, the vartabed had gone distributing books and preaching throughout the whole region of Aleppo and Aintab. When he had sent priest Vartanes a prisoner to the monastery of Marash, and then banished him to Cesarea, Vartanes had first awakened the monks, and then preached the gospel all the way to Cesarea.

The missionaries wisely availed themselves of this

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rising interest, in tours for preaching, conversing, and distributing religious treatises. Messrs. Powers, Johnston, Van Lennep, Smith, Peabody, Schneider, Goodell, Everett, Benjamin, pushed forth to Aintab, Aleppo, Broosa, Harpoot, Sivas, Diarbekir, Arabkir, Cesarea, and various other places, through the empire.

They soon found that they were in the midst of one of the most extraordinary religious movements of modern times, silent, and sometimes untraceable, but potent and pervasive. In every important town of the empire, where there were Armenians, there were found to be, as early as 1849, one or more "lovers of evangelical truth." But it was no causeless movement. The quiet working of the "little leaven" was traceable almost from its source by indubitable signs. It was a notable sight to see, when, in 1838, the vartabed and leading men of Orta Keuy, on the Bosphorus, where the missionaries first gained access to the Armenians, went and removed the pictures from the village church. It was a notable thing to hear, when, in 1841, the Armenian preachers of Constantinople were discoursing on repentance and the mediatorial office of Christ. It was another landmark, when, in 1842, the fervor of the converts not only filled the city with rumors of the new doctrines, but, after a season of special prayer, held in a neighboring valley, sent forth Priest Vartanes on a missionary tour into the heart of Asia Minor. A still more significant fact it was, when, in that year and the next, the Armenian women were effectually reached and roused, till family worship began in many a household, and a Female Seminary at Pera became (in 1845) a necessity. The brethren had observed the constant increase of inquirers, often from a distance, and they had found, even in 1843, such

a demand for their books as the press at Smyrna was unable fully to supply. In many places, as at Nicomedia, Adabazar, and Aintab, books and tracts began the work.

The preaching services at Constantinople would be occasionally attended by individuals from four or five other towns, and at Erzroom one Sabbath (February, 1846) there were attendants from six different places. The Seminary for young men at Bebek (a suburb of Constantinople) drew visitors from great distances, and from all quarters, as far as Alexandria, St. Petersburg, and the Euphrates. The native brethren also had been engaged in disseminating the truth, and the first awakenings at Killis, Kessab, and Rodosto, for example, were due to their labors. And thus, though the movement rolled on at last with great power and speed, the preparation had been long and broad. Yet not without abundant and fierce opposition. Indeed, the resistance was so common, sooner or later, that it gives only a glimpse at the facts, to tell how, even at Constantinople, the brethren and one of the missionaries were once pelted with stones; how the little band at Nicomedia were at times compelled to hold their worship, somewhat like the early Christians and the Covenanters, in distant fields, and even after religious liberty was proclaimed, were abused in the streets, and had their houses stoned; how, at Adabazar, a Protestant teacher was put in chains and in prison; how at Trebizond the very women attacked with stones two of their own sex, as they returned from the preaching, and the husbands who protected their own wives were thrown into prison and the stocks, like Paul and Silas of old; how the mob at Erzroom burst into the house of Dr. Smith, and destroyed his books and furniture; and how, in 1847, Mr. Johnston

was expelled from Aintab by the governor, and stoned out of town by Armenian school-boys and teachers, although the very next year Aintab became the seat of a church that grew with singular rapidity, and a great centre of Christian activity. These things died out only by degrees; not until after the Sultan had issued his firmans, first (in 1850) placing the Protestants on the same basis with other Christian communities; and again (in 1853) placing his Christian subjects on the same level with Mohammedans before the law; and yet once more (in 1856) granting full "freedom of conscience and of religious profession;" not until long after three Patriarchs, Stepan, Hagopos, and Matteos, had tried each to outdo his predecessor in severity, and the third of them had (in 1848) been deposed for financial frauds.

It was in the year 1849 that the missionaries, with five native pastors ordained already, and with the clear recognition of the broad fields now white for the harvest, adopted a Report, setting forth to the native Christians the great duty of supporting their pastors and religious institutions, relieving the missionaries for other fields, and themselves engaging "in the further extension of the truth." Next year they turned and asked the home churches for twelve more missionaries, to oversee this wonderful uprising. For several years in succession the Board repeated the call for "twelve more missionaries." For two years six only answered. "From every part of the land," wrote Mr. Dwight, in 1853, "there comes to us one appeal, 'Send us preachers, send us preachers;'" and Mr. Schneider wrote home, "I almost fear to have the post arrive." Six other laborers responded in 1854; and next year came the urgent call for "seventeen," to meet the great emergency.

The Crimean war for three or four years agitated the nation and the nations. But the spiritual reformation rolled on; it was a mightier and a deeper force. It was impossible for the missionaries to keep pace with the calls. The wonder is, that they could accomplish so much as they did. At one time (1855) they hurried five young students into the ministry before their studies were completed. But they felt and wrote that they were losing opportunities all the time. And they were right. Humanly speaking, it seemed as though with a sufficient missionary force the Armenian element of Turkey could have been carried everywhere by storm.

From this time forth the enterprise became too broad even to trace in this rapid way. If the whole movement shall ever be suitably recorded, the history of *this* reformation will be second in interest to no other that ever has been written. There are scores and scores of villages, each of which would furnish materials for a volume; and multitudes of cases that recall the fervor, faith, and fortitude of apostolic times. Let us hope that they may find their adequate historian. For the present we can only refer to the contemporary pages of the *Missionary Herald*.

The breadth of the movement began also to demand new missionary centres. The book depository, which had been on the north side of the Golden Horn, planted itself boldly (1855) in the heart of Constantinople; and six or eight boxes of books might be seen at a time, marked to "Diarbekir," "Arabkir," "Cesarea," "Aintab," and so on. The Seminary proved inadequate to the demand for preachers and teachers, and the organization of other seminaries about this time at Tokat and Aintab, indicated the time as not distant when there

should be three missions, instead of one, in Asiatic Turkey. Indeed, Mr. Dunmore was writing, in 1857, that "forty men" were needed at once, as teachers and preachers around Harpoot; and Dr. Hamlin was urgently pressing the wants of the Bulgarians in European Turkey.

One of the most delightful instances of Christian magnanimity was displayed in England about this time. The financial troubles of 1857 in America had embarrassed the Board, and threatened serious embarrassment to this mission. Noble Christians in England, of all Evangelical communions, including ministers of the Church of England, came at once to the rescue. They formed the "Turkish Missions Aid Society," invited Dr. Dwight to present our cause in England, and raised money thenceforward, not to found missions of their own in Turkey, but to aid ours. At an anniversary of the Society in 1860, the Earl of Shaftesbury crowned this magnanimity of deeds by an equal magnanimity of words. He said of our missionaries in Turkey, "I do not believe that in the whole history of missions, I do not believe that in the history of diplomacy, or in the history of any negotiation carried on between man and man, we can find anything to equal the wisdom, the soundness, and the pure Evangelical truth of the men who constitute the American mission. I have said it twenty times before, and I will say it again, — for the expression appropriately conveys my meaning, — that they are a marvelous combination of common sense and piety."

At this point, the enterprise, like a Banyan tree, changed its branches into new roots, and henceforth was reported as the Western, Central, and Eastern Turkey missions. The main feature of interest became that of sure but gradual growth.

The Western Turkey mission-field covers a region of singular historic interest. It includes alike the field of Troy and of the "Seven Churches." It probably saw the origin both of the Iliad and the Odyssey, and of the Apocalypse and the fourth Gospel. In its north-western portion flows the little river Granicus, where Alexander first defeated the Persian armies, and in its south-western part lies the once world-renowned seaport of Miletus, where Paul made his affecting speech to the elders who had come from Ephesus, that seat of the marvelous temple of Diana, and of the church of the "Ephesians." The poor little village of Isnik, too small for a mission station, is all that remains of the Nicæa, famous for the Nicene Creed, framed in a council where Constantine presided—a city long the bulwark of Constantinople against the Turks, then the capital of the Sultan Solyman, and afterwards retaken by the first crusaders. The centre of missionary operations is the great city of unparalleled site and matchless harbor, rebuilt by Constantine, the object of six captures, and more than twenty sieges, the ignis fatuus that turned the first Napoleon towards Moscow rather than St. Petersburg, the long-coveted treasure of the Russian czars, and the place of five great Christian councils. Broosa, another of our stations, is at the ancient capital of the Ottoman empire; and its castle is said to commemorate the time and the work of Hannibal the Carthaginian. Nicomedia, still another station, was once the capital of the Bithynian kings, the home of Diocletian when he ruled the Eastern empire, and the place where poison ended the life of Hannibal. One of the stations last occupied, Manissa, is the old Magnesia, where the two Scipios defeated Antiochus the Great, and won for Rome the empire of the East.

In this region, covered thick with historic associations, the twenty-four churches,¹ with their thousand members, their twenty-nine pastors and licensed preachers, and their forty-five hundred enrolled Protestants, only indicate the deep under-current of influence now at work. A considerable body of missionaries are still furnishing the original forces. The press pours forth some fifty thousand volumes and thirty thousand tracts a year, in six different languages, including the English. Two "Evangelical Unions" of native churches and pastors have been formed, and the churches contribute already to Christian objects four thousand dollars a year. A theological seminary, and a ladies' boarding-school, now at Marsovan; two other girls' schools; training classes at Broosa and Sivas; Robert College, the indirect child of the mission, now looking out conspicuously over the Bosphorus, with its hundred and eighty students of seventeen different nationalities; and last, not least, a band of lady missionaries finding their way into the homes and hearts of their sisters, — these are some of the influences unfalteringly at work in the heart of the Turkish empire.

The Central Turkey mission numbers among its thirty stations and out-stations Antioch, the old "Queen of the East," long the chief city of Asia, if not of the world, then the residence of Syrian kings, and afterwards of Roman governors, the place where "the disciples were first called Christians;" Aleppo, which succeeded Palmyra in the trade between Europe and the East, still the commercial centre of Northern Syria; Oorfa, a traditional "Ur of the Chaldees;" and Tarsus, where Paul was born, and Alexander nearly died. Here² twenty-two churches comprise eighteen hundred members, and average congregations of more than five thousand persons.

¹ See page 29.

² See page 30.

with eight thousand registered Protestants. A theological seminary, with thirty-seven students, at Marash; two female seminaries; eighteen hundred and forty communicants in twenty-two churches, some of which carry all their own expenses, while the whole body contribute six thousand dollars in gold for Christian charities; eight thousand registered Protestants; nineteen pastors and preachers; an Evangelical Union, courageous enough to plan a Christian college, and to gain pledges from their own churches of nine thousand dollars for the purpose; a strong staff of lady missionaries working most hopefully among their sex; and a general diffusion of light among both Armenians and Mohammedans, which no figures can display,—indicate a hold of the gospel in this region so strong as to raise the question of “closing up the proper missionary work in Central Turkey at no distant day.” An amount and variety of active Christian effort has been put forth here, and a long-continued religious agitation awakened from such centres as Aintab and Marash, which no one can understand, except as he traces back the letters of the missionaries for the last fifteen years. The history of all the commotions at Aintab, from the time when Mr. Johnston was stoned out of town to the time when it has become the seat of two self-supporting churches, with native pastors and near five hundred members, surrounded by a cluster of thirteen out-stations, containing nearly four hundred more church members, would require a volume. The whole course and working of the mission are far too remarkable to be dismissed in this summary way. There is a wide-spread expectation of a coming change, of which the two hundred and twenty members admitted to the churches during the last year *but the few drops before the shower.*

The Eastern Turkey mission deserves special mention for the method and rapidity of its achievements. Coming later, for the most part, than the other divisions of the Turkish missions, it was enabled to build on their foundation and profit by their experience. Its methods have been largely the same which were employed in Turkey from the beginning, and specially and powerfully developed in the central mission, but perhaps still more concentrated here. We have also the advantage of a very full narration from the chief actors in the scene. Their vigorous and invigorating work, novel not so much in conception as in execution, bids fair to mark an epoch in the history of missions. The territory includes, at Mosul, the site of Nineveh, and in ancient Armenia, probably the cradle of the human race. The gospel is carried to the region of "the Fall." One portion of this territory, the Harpoot mission field, has been the scene of a most interesting and remarkable experiment. About fourteen years ago, Messrs. Wheeler and Allen, with their wives, entered on this field, followed, after two years, by Mr. H. N. Barnum and his wife. The region committed to them was somewhat larger than Massachusetts, containing twenty-five hundred villages, and a population of five hundred thousand persons. These brethren went with the determination to introduce a self-supporting, self-propagating religion; to offer Christianity "as a leaven," and not as a "leavened loaf;" to confer privileges which in the reception should test the self-denial of the recipient. They adhered to three fundamental, and, as they thought, apostolical principles: First, to "ordain elders in every church," giving a pastor from among the people to every church at its formation; Second, to leave each church to choose its own pastor,

make its own pecuniary engagements with him, and assume the responsibility of fulfilment. Temporary aid might be granted, to the amount of one half the salary, to be reduced each year, and in five years to cease. The third principle was to make the churches at once independent of missionary control.

These points were not carried without a hard struggle, and often bitter opposition. It took seven years to bring the church at Harpoot up to the entire support of its pastor. All their firmness, patience, ingenuity, and energy were taxed to the utmost; but they carried it, and the next three were made self-supporting more easily than that one. They determined in like manner to do for the people in all respects only just what would enable them to do for themselves. They put upon them nearly the whole cost of their church edifices. In their schools they taught no English, to tempt their young men into foreign employments. They insisted that their converts, even those who pointed to their gray hair in remonstrance, should learn to read the Bible, and that those who had learned should go and teach others, especially their wives. After the schools were fairly under way they threw the support of them upon the natives. Their books, the Scriptures included, they made it a rule to sell at some price, but never to give away. Almost without exception those who bought books were first taught to read them; and the main dependence has been on the Bible—read, preached, and sung. The sacred volume itself, without the living preacher, has, in frequent instances, borne blessed fruit. Thus, in the village of Bizmishen, "thief" Maghak bought a Bible, learned to read it, became an honest man and Christian, and established public worship with a good chapel and the nucleus of a

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little church in his village. Another Bible, sold by him, gathered an audience of thirty men and women at Najaran, forty miles away, to hear the Bible read and explained. In another instance, a colporteur, spending the night at Perchenj, found seventy men assembled in a stable, listening to one who was reading the Bible. Messrs. Wheeler and Barnum visited the place, spent a Sabbath, and sent them a teacher. A revival followed, and in two years the little church numbered forty members, with twenty-one hopeful converts, and a native pastor settled over them, and owned a chapel and a parsonage. These brethren, self-moved, organized a missionary society to go, two and two, into the neighboring villages, to explain and sell the Bible. Two of them entered Hooeli, a village where the missionaries had repeatedly and vainly endeavored to gain a foothold. They prayed as they went, "O Lord, give us open doors and hearts." Their prayer was answered. The villagers applied to the missionaries for a teacher; but as none could be had, the men of Perchenj sent one of their own number to begin the work. Soon after, a seminary student went to spend his summer vacation there, and a mob pitched him and his effects into the street. But the heaven was working. A place of worship, holding three hundred persons, was erected; schools were opened to learn the Bible; a blessed awakening came, attended with forty or fifty conversions, including some of the most hopeless cases in the village; and at the last information they were about to organize a church, and to settle and support as pastor one of the men who first came with the Bible and a prayer to God for a hearing.

Such is the nature of the work. Every church and every community of Bible readers has a Bible society,

that sends forth its books in bags on the backs of donkeys ; and the churches send forth their members, two by two, for days and weeks together, in the home missionary work. The community of Harpoot had thirty-five members thus engaged at one time. They are also prosecuting a "Foreign Missionary" enterprise in a region extending from four to twenty days' journey to the south. This movement is aided by the theological students in their long vacation — the seminary being founded on the principle of accustoming students to pastoral work while pursuing their studies. These young men are trained to be Bible men and practical men. When on one occasion they were found to be above doing some necessary manual labor at the seminary, they were brought to their senses by a reduction of their beneficiary aid.

The persevering and often amusing methods by which a penurious people have been made generous and self-sacrificing, and the modes in which the missionaries have persisted in doing the work, not of mere educators, nor even of pastors, but of Christian missionaries, infusing the "leaven," must be learned from Mr. Wheeler's book, "Ten Years on the Euphrates." It is as brimful of instruction for the home field as the foreign. Would that many of the home churches might be brought up to the same level.

So thoroughly has the spirit of independent action been infused into these churches, that, in 1865, they organized themselves into an "Evangelical Union," with a thorough system of Christian activity, Bible distribution, Education Society, Home and Foreign Missions, and church erection. The fruits are yet largely in the future — we may hope, in the near future. The missionaries are already feeling that the time is not distant when they can leave

this field for another. Already is their work represented by eighteen churches,—ten of them entirely independent,—by seventy out-stations, by a hundred and twelve native preachers, pastors, and other helpers, “by thousands of men and women reading the word of God, and by thousands more of children and youth gathered into schools; in a word, by the foundations of a Christian civilization laid upon a sure basis in the affections of an earnest, self-sacrificing, Christian community.”

Many outward tokens begin to show the silent power of this mission. In Harpoot city and its seventy out-stations, in which years ago were two hundred and fifty-six priests, there were in 1867 but one hundred and forty-five. The revenue of the monasteries is passing away. The monastery of Hukalegh, which once collected three hundred measures of wheat from that village and Bizmishen, then collected but eighteen. The cause of temperance is advanced; believers spontaneously leave off wine-drinking. A wonderful elevation has taken place in the character and position of woman. “How happens it,” said a man one day to Mr. Wheeler, “that *all* the missionaries’ wives are angels?” But now, says Mr. Wheeler, “some of them there have angels too for their companions.” One of the most blessed fruits of the gospel is seen in its effects on the family circle. These believers “are as careful to maintain secret, family, and social prayer as Christians in this land, and the last more so.” The Sabbath is carefully and conscientiously kept by them. And in their Christian liberality they seem to be an example to the best churches of this country.

The Eastern Turkey mission, of which Harpoot is a principal station, now¹ occupies one hundred and six out-stations, and has twenty-eight churches, containing a

¹ See page 31.

thousand members, with average congregations of fifty-five hundred persons. Nearly, if not quite, half the churches are self-supporting. Twenty-seven native pastors and twenty-three licensed preachers are dispensing the gospel, and sixty-two young men are now training for the ministry. The Evangelical Union is maintaining four missionary stations among the mountains of Koordistan.

In glancing over the present religious aspect of Asiatic Turkey, it is impossible not to feel that the seeds of great events have been widely sown. Seventy-four churches, with four thousand members, an average attendance of fourteen thousand persons, and about twenty thousand registered Protestants; a hundred native preachers, occupying more than twice that number of places, scattered through the empire, who have received five hundred members in the year just passed; a hundred and forty-three young men on their way to the ministry; four Evangelical Unions, apparently able to carry on the Lord's work, were every missionary taken away by the providence of God; a Christian press, pouring forth ten million pages in a year; a general spirit of inquiry through the empire; — all are tokens of changes, if not of revolutions, in Turkey, which even this generation may look upon with wonder. He that is wise will watch the course of events.

It is several years since Layard, the English explorer, could testify that there was scarcely a town of importance in Turkey without a Protestant community. And now we have a remarkable voice from within. Hagop Effendi, the civil head of the Protestant community, has recently made a tour of observation through the empire, at the charge of the sultan. In his report he declares that

"those who have become Protestant in principle far exceed in number the registered Protestants, and those who are willing to avow themselves such. The indirect influence of Protestantism has been greater and healthier than what is apparent. The fact that eighty-five per cent. of the adults in the [Protestant] community can read, speaks greatly in favor of its members. Any one acquainted with the social condition and religious ideas of the Oriental people, who will take pains to compare them with the liberal institutions introduced, can readily imagine the state of society which must necessarily follow such a change. I should hardly do justice were I to pass without noticing the strictly sober habits of our people. The use of strong drink is very seldom found and habitual drunkenness is very rarely known. I was gratified to find everywhere a great improvement in domestic relations as compared with the condition of families before they became Protestants. I need not weary our friends with details to show the effect of the healthy influence of the various Protestant institutions—such as Sabbath schools, social prayer-meetings, women's meetings, and the little philanthropic associations coming into existence with the advance of Protestantism. The noble institutions and liberal organizations which have been introduced among this people are yet in their infancy; and their power of elevating the individual man, in his moral and intellectual capacities, is not so apparent in the unsettled state of affairs which of necessity follows such a mighty social and religious revolution; but they are objects of great interest and a source of great encouragement to every close observer of the course of affairs, even in the very confusion which is produced by them."

In a recent letter to Secretary Clark, he makes the following interesting statements:—

“ The most zealous advocate of American civilization could not have done half as much for his country abroad as the missionary has done. The religious and social organizations, the various institutions introduced, are doing a great deal in introducing American civilization. From the wild mountains of Gaour Dagh, in Cilicia, you may go across to the no less wild mountains of Bhotan, on the borders of Persia; or you may take Antioch if you please, and go on any line to the black shores of the Euxine; you will certainly agree with me in declaring that the American missionary has served his country no less than his Master. Even in wild Kurdistan you will find some one who can reason with you quite in Yankee style, can make you a speech which you cannot but own to be substantially Yankee, with Yankee idioms and American examples to support his arguments; and if you want to satisfy your curiosity still more, you may pay your visit to the schools established by the missionaries in the wild mountains of the Turkomans, in Kurdistan, the plains of Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, or Bithynia. Question the school-boy as you would at home; you will find his answers quite familiar to you. You may question him on geography, and you will certainly find, to your surprise, that he knows more of the United States than perhaps of his own native country. Question him about social order, he will tell you all men are created equal. Indeed, what Dr. Hamlin is silently doing with his Robert College, and the American missionary with his Theological Seminary and school-books, all European diplomatists united cannot overbalance. Having seen all this, you will certainly not be astonished if you

see Yankee clocks; American chairs, tables, organs; American agricultural implements; Yankee cotton-gins, saw-mills, sewing-machines; American flowers in the very heart of Kurdistan; Yankee saddles, and a Yankee rider on the wild mountains of Asia Minor, perhaps singing, with his native companion, some familiar tune. Be not surprised if you be invited to a prayer-meeting on these mountains, where you hear the congregation singing *Old Hundred*, as heartily as you have ever heard it at home. You will certainly own then, if you have not before, that the American people have a sacred interest in this country."

The European Turkey mission,¹ separately organized in 1871, and using Constantinople as its center of publication, deserves a few words, by reason of its prospective importance. The country was explored, and a small beginning made, as long ago as 1858. In that year Mr. Morse entered Adrianople; but his books and two thousand copies of the Turkish Testament were seized by the authorities. When, on remonstrance of the British and American consuls, the Porte ordered the surrender of the books, the desponding utterance of the Turkish officials was well worthy of notice: "If it is the will of God that the Bible prevail, let his will be done."

The mission is directed primarily not to Turks, but to Bulgarians, a people numbering perhaps five or six millions. They belong to the Slavonic race, and nominally to the Greek church. They are a pastoral people, neat, amiable, and industrious, but uneducated and uninquiring. Early attempts to awaken their interest were unsuccessful and discouraging. But with the continuance

¹ See page 28.

of these efforts, the intrusion of macadamized roads, railways, and civilization, a change has taken place. Education begins to be prized, and forty young Bulgarians are in Robert college. Everything is now in readiness for a vigorous campaign, if the Christian soldiers can be found. The field is thoroughly explored. The strong points are designated, and three stations occupied. A complete Bulgarian Bible—the fruit of Mr. Riggs's twelve years' toil—is ready; and there is a wide-spread desire to obtain it. A few converts are scattered here and there, and a young and active church is just organized. Two other hopeful signs are seen: The spirit of persecution has been awakened at Yamboul; and at Bansko an earnest written demand for light in the Greek church itself—for elevation of the schools, for the observance of the Sabbath, for religious services in the language of the people, and “that the teachings of the gospel be preached.”

Here everything seems now ready for the sickle. If the laborers can but be furnished, and the enterprise pushed as the greatness of the opportunity requires, we may well watch, and pray, and hope for cheering results. It is a mission on which to look with an intelligent interest, for itself and for its relations.

SUPPLEMENT.

January, 1889.

THE foregoing sketch is now reprinted from the original plates, as giving the history of the Turkish missions down to 1871. The story of missionary operations since that date, if given in detail, would require a volume. Only a few statements respecting the present condition of the missions can here be presented.

The European Turkey Mission covers ground that in 1871 was under control of Turkey, part of which is now independent of that power. In the war between Russia and Turkey in 1878-79, the region in which the mission is located was devastated, and though our missionaries were delivered from many perils, one of the stations, Eski Zagra, was utterly destroyed. In the adjustments of territory that have been made since that war, the provinces of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia have become practically independent. In 1885, by the act of the people, these two provinces were united; and after a short but sharp conflict between Bulgaria and Servia, their union was recognized by Turkey and the Great European Powers. The two stations Samokov and Philippopolis are in Bulgaria, while Monastir, in the ancient Macedonia, which was occupied as a station in 1877, is still under Turkish authority. But the Bulgarians are scattered throughout Macedonia, and the labors of missionaries of the Board are confined to people of this race. Two mem-

bers of this mission are located in Constantinople, engaged in preparing a Christian literature for the Bulgarians, issuing books and tracts, and also a weekly and monthly paper, the *Zornitza*, which is believed to have had no insignificant part in preparing the way for a free constitution in Bulgaria. The Collegiate and Theological Institute at Samokov has eighty-eight students, and the Female Boarding Schools of Samokov and Monastir, one hundred and ten. The number of Bulgarians at Robert College and at the "Home" at Constantinople indicates the progressive character of the race, and gives promise of large growth in the immediate future. This mission has 4 stations; 29 out-stations; 8 churches, having 650 members; 9 ordained missionaries, and 1 physician; 14 femaleassistant missionaries; 17 native pastors and preachers, and 30 teachers and other helpers.

The Western Turkey Mission has 8 stations; 121 out-stations; 29 churches, having 2,648 members; 23 ordained missionaries; 1 treasurer; 44 female assistant missionaries; 74 native pastors and preachers; 209 teachers and other helpers. There are 135 common schools, with more than 5,000 pupils. Besides Robert College, at Constantinople, which is not directly connected with the mission, although an outgrowth of it and in sympathy with it, and Anatolia College, which has been opened at Marsovan, there are six high schools for boys, and seven high schools for girls, including the "Home" at Constantinople. These institutions have a membership of 913. The Theological Seminary at Marsovan is doing all it can to supply pastors for the native churches, and from every direction calls are coming for preachers and teachers. The *Avedaper*,

a Christian newspaper in three languages, circulates through the cities and towns of the interior, carrying the light of the gospel both to Protestants and non-Protestants. In the year 1887 the mission press at Constantinople issued 39 different publications; the aggregate number of copies being 88,920, and the pages 7,961,547. These are in the Armenian, Armeno-Turkish, Græco-Turkish, and Bulgarian languages. Work for the Greeks is especially prosecuted at Constantinople, Broosa, Manisa, Trebizond, and some other places.

The Central Turkey Mission has now two stations, namely, Aintab and Marash; but the work of the mission is by no means confined to these localities. Missionaries also reside at Adana and Hadjin, which are regarded as out-stations of Marash. There are 6 ordained missionaries, 1 physician, 1 teacher, and 16 female missionaries. There are 51 out-stations, with 33 churches, having 4,050 members. There are 46 pastors and preachers, with 114 teachers and other helpers. The growth of the Protestant community has been steady and large. Central Turkey College at Aintab, commenced in 1874, is designed to be a Christian college in the best sense of the term, having a medical department connected with the college. There is a theological seminary at Marash. Female education is efficiently prosecuted at Marash, Aintab, Adana, and Hadjin.

The Eastern Turkey Mission has five principal stations, namely: Harpoot, Erzroom, Van, Bitlis, and Mardin, with 15 ordained missionaries, 1 physician, and 28 female missionaries. Connected with these stations are 115 out-stations, 41 churches, 78 native

pastors and preachers, 218 teachers and other helpers. The church membership is 2,542. There are 144 common schools, and the total number under instruction in 1888 was 5,261. Euphrates College, at Harpoot, is a group of institutions having, in addition to the college proper, a primary, a normal, a female, and a theological department. An endowment of over \$70,000 has been secured, and the institution, having at the beginning of 1880 about 150 pupils, and in 1888 in all its departments nearly 500 pupils, is exerting a powerful influence throughout Eastern Turkey. From Mardin the mission is reaching out into the Jebel Tour region, and native preachers and colporters have gone to Mosul.

The Scriptures are now translated into all the principal languages of the Turkish Empire, and a Christian literature can be presented to all who will read it. The impulse given to education is one of the most noticeable results of missionary efforts. Not merely have the converts in the mission churches been inspired to seek instruction, but the Turks and Armenians have been shamed into the establishment of schools, as they have seen the contrast between the ignorance of their children and the progress of the youth in the Protestant communities. It is also a result of missionary efforts that a remarkable change has taken place in the position of woman. Formerly the slave of man, and kept in ignorance, her true position is coming to be recognized. Nor should we fail to notice the changed attitude toward evangelical missions, of the people who still adhere to their old forms of religion. The Armenians, ecclesiastics as well as their followers, are more friendly, and in some cases even welcome our mission-

aries to their churches. In several places there seems to be something like a true reformation going on among the adherents of the Old Church, and more or less evangelical truth is presented from not a few of their pulpits. And although there are on the part of Moslems signs of a reaction toward the old intolerance, there has been, and there will continue to be, a breaking down of the haughtiness and bigotry of the Turk.

The mission in Syria, once under the care of the American Board, but transferred to the American Presbyterians in 1870, has been remarkably prospered. At its last report it had 38 American missionaries, male and female, besides the 11 American teachers in the Syrian Protestant College. There are 85 congregations, 70 Sunday-schools, and a church membership of more than 1,500. The Syrian Protestant College has nearly 200 students. The American United Presbyterian Board is laboring in Egypt, the Southern Presbyterian Board has a mission in Greece, and the English Church Missionary Society is at work in Palestine. With these exceptions the American Board is the only great missionary body now engaged in extensive labors for evangelizing the Turkish Empire. It belongs to us, in the orderings of Divine Providence, to give the gospel to the different races of that empire.

The summary of the four missions of the American Board referred to in this sketch is as follows: Missionaries from the United States, 160, of whom 53 are ordained; stations, 19; out-stations, 316; native pastors, 69; native preachers, 146; teachers and other native helpers, 571; churches, 111, with a membership of 9,890, of whom 739 were added in the year 1887—

88; colleges, high schools, and theological seminaries, 34, with 1,624 pupils; girls' boarding schools, 18, with 870 pupils; common schools, 477, with 16,573 pupils; total number under instruction, 18,067. During 1887-88 the contributions of the native churches amounted to \$57,148, an average of nearly six dollars for each church member. This latter sum, comparing the value of a day's labor in Turkey and in this country, would be equivalent to not less than \$60, which, considering the great poverty of the people, is a remarkable exhibition of liberality and self-denial.

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